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CATAWBA COUNTY TO BEGIN NOROVIRUS CASE-CONTROL STUDY

HICKORY, NC – Catawba County Public Health, in collaboration with the North Carolina Division of Public Health (NCDPH) and Harbor Inn Seafood Restaurant, will begin a case-control study to further learn about norovirus. Health officials will conduct the study through phone calls to Harbor Inn patrons.

The case-control study will compare Harbor Inn patrons affected by norovirus to those who did not get sick from eating at the restaurant between January 13 and January 22. A random selection of approximately 100 individuals will be called by health officials to complete a short questionnaire. The questionnaire may include questions such as what an individual ate.

“There does not appear to be any concern about ongoing exposure to norovirus at Harbor Inn,” said, Doug Urand, health director, Catawba County Public Health. “A case-control study will give us and state health officials the ability to learn more about the nature of norovirus, how it spreads, and what steps may be available to help better prevent this type of illness in the future.”

Studies can take up to three weeks with results available several weeks after that. State officials acknowledge that due to the nature of norovirus, data collected may not point to a specific cause.

While not all Harbor Inn customers will be called, the cooperation of those individuals who do receive calls is appreciated.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), norovirus is a common, easily-transmissible, and highly contagious illness that can cause vomiting, diarrhea and stomach pain. The best method to prevention is to wash hands frequently with soap and water, and to stay home when sick.

As it becomes available, updated information will be posted at www.catawbacountync.gov/phealth/.

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